

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **AL**

NEW YORK TIMES
29 April 1986

U.S. Plans End Of Military Ties To New Zealand

By **BERNARD GWERTZMAN**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 28 — The United States has informed Australia and New Zealand that it will formally scrap its 35-year old defense commitment to New Zealand if that longtime ally goes ahead with legislation to bar visits by nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered ships, State Department officials said today.

Under an arrangement worked out during the visit here of Prime Minister Bob Hawke of Australia two weeks ago, President Reagan and Mr. Hawke will exchange letters affirming that the United States and Australia will together keep the so-called Anzus treaty alive, the officials said.

Treaty Signed in 1951

In line with that policy, the annual meeting of Anzus foreign ministers has been changed this year to a meeting of Australian and United States officials in San Francisco on Aug. 11 and 12.

The United States, Australia and New Zealand, allies in two world wars, signed the treaty in San Francisco on Sept. 1, 1951, agreeing that in the event of an armed attack in the Pacific area on any one of them they would "act to meet the common danger."

As a result, the three nations held joint military exercises regularly and shared intelligence and other military and diplomatic information.

But if the New Zealand Government pushes through the antinuclear legislation as now worded, State Department

officials said, the United States will declare that it has found New Zealand in "material breach" of Article 2 of the treaty.

The article states that "the parties separately and jointly by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."

The split stems from the commitment of New Zealand's Labor Party Government to a nonnuclear policy. As part of that policy, it has declared that no ships that are nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed can enter New Zealand ports.

The United States objects to any ban on nuclear-powered ships, but its main concern is over the prohibition against nuclear-armed vessels. It has a long-standing policy of refusing to confirm or deny that a particular warship has nuclear arms.

The pending legislation would ban nuclear-powered ships and empower Prime Minister David Lange to allow ships to enter port if he is convinced that they are not nuclear-armed. The United States rejects that language and has told the New Zealanders and Australians that if it is approved as scheduled in August the defense commitment to New Zealand will be scrapped.

A Psychological Impact

The initial effect of such a move would be largely psychological, Administration officials said. New Zealand faces no foreseeable military threat that would require American aid. But the two countries have been regarded as close allies for so many years that a formal rupture would inevitably have a long-term impact that cannot be estimated with certainty now.

The United States virtually suspended defense ties with New Zealand after it refused to permit the destroyer Buchanan to pay a scheduled visit early in 1985 unless Washington affirmed that it did not carry nuclear weapons.

The United States canceled the ship's visit, suspended all planned maneuvers with New Zealand and cut it off from intelligence information given to allies. But it has avoided a formal renunciation of its defense commitment to New Zealand pending the passage of the legislation.

The Labor Government of Prime Minister Hawke of Australia has repeatedly urged New Zealand not to approve the legislation making formal the existing Government policy. But unlike the United States, it does not intend to renounce its own mutual security commitments with New Zealand.